

PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS OF ADOLESCENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF KERALA

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ABSTRACT

The Humanistic approach in education as envisaged by Maslow (1962) has brought in the awareness that at each moment of the life, any person is in the process of changing into something, a little different from what he now is the whole pattern is changing and it is important to keep in mind at one time both the fact of pattern and the fact of change. What the pattern at any stage will depend upon the previous pattern and upon the influences being brought to bear upon the individual from his present surroundings. A person, to some extent, shapes the pattern of life by choices and decision she makes at successive stages. Once a choice has been made, and its effects built into the developing structure, it can never be eradicated.

Keywords: Psychological needs, Adolescents, Development

INTRODUCTION

AFFECTIVE EDUCATION: ITS RELEVANCE

According to Schutz (1958), there are four types of development necessary for the realization of an individual's full potential viz, bodily functioning, personal functioning, interpersonal development and individual's relationships to societal institutions, social organizations, culture etc...It is on the interpersonal development, the personal awareness of the interpersonal needs exist. It is often felt that one of the main obstacles to the fulfillment of interpersonal relation is people's inability to be aware of their own needs and feelings. Each person must come into terms with these basic needs. They are the means by which full human potential between individuals is developed. (Schutz, 1967, p.11)

Education is a many-sided process in which the different phases of development – intellectual, social emotional, spiritual- are involved. These are the different phases through which change in personality of an individual occurs. All these aspects of development are interrelated and interdependent.

To understand the child, the adolescent or the adult, it is necessary to see him as a person possessing a certain 'pattern' of development and at any moment, exhibiting 'uniqueness' in relation to his fellows. Since emotional development is one of the aspect of personality change, education may be thought of as attaining emotional stability. It may also be considered as the process of coming into terms with other people- learning to live in many kinds of groups and communities. It should be conceived as the process by which the individual comes to terms with himself, become aware of his strengths and his limitations and arrives at a concept of himself.

In several studies, the mood fluctuations of children, adolescents and adults were tracked over a week and as expected adolescents reported some what lower moods than did school age children and adults. (Csikszentmihalyi& Larson: 1984). Furthermore compared to the moods of adults, adolescents feelings were less stable. During this period mental conflicts arise from a variety of causes. Difficulty in gratifying psychological needs is one of them.

Need and Significance of the study

Despite the crucial nature of the psychological construct under the study, researches relating to this particular area have been quite unsatisfactory. Review of related literature shows that only a very few studies have been reported in the area of psychological needs and related variables. Many writers stress needs or goals as primary influences on human behavior. Rotter (1954) and Mishel (1966) stressed the subjective value outcomes as important determinants of behavior, people are inclined to move toward outcomes that are valued by them. Others have stressed the importance of specific motives such as need for approval, need for achievement or need for affiliation or by a common term 'psychological needs'. Most of the studies concluded that 90 percent of the subjects under study were thwarted in their basic psychological needs which resulted in withdrawal behavior among them (Perry : 1976). The existence of unsatisfied needs creates tension within the child which, in turn, leads to behavioral problems and low level learning in classrooms. Studies conducted abroad and studies in India high light the relationship of certain psychological needs and related problems. Some of these studies indicate that behavioral problems are the result of the denial of parental affection and lack of congenial home atmosphere. Thus the child's behaviour is initiated and directed by his needs and the existence of such needs always creates confusion among them which will ultimately results into the poor accomplishment in academic performance.

Statement of the problem

It has been evident that the changes in adolescent moodiness are reflected in scholastic learning, in personal development, in the growth of moral judgment and in political thinking. It is at this stage the anxiety to psychological needs rise to the maximum.

Since adolescents pass through a period of crisis, their ego is confronted with new challenges: achieving independence, casting off old emotional ties and developing new one. Physiological and psychological needs boost up in this period, which cause problems among adolescent learning in class rooms, there by gaining low achievement.

It is in this context the study of psychological needs of adolescents assumes significance. Hence the study is titled as *Psychological needs of adolescents in secondary schools of Kerala*.

Objectives

The present investigation is aimed at studying the psychological needs of adolescents in the secondary schools of Kerala. The following are the specific objectives of the study:

1. To study the general nature of the following psychological needs of adolescents in the secondary schools of Kerala
 1. Need for love and affection
 2. Need for recognition and approval
 3. Need for self esteem
 4. Need for security
 5. Need for Independence
 6. Need for creative expression
 7. Need for knowledge and new experience
 8. Need for Achievement
 9. Need for delight
 10. Need for Adequacy
 11. Need to be needed
 12. Need to belong
2. To identify the High, Average and Low need groups with respect to each of the 12 psychological need variables under study
3. To compare the psychological needs of the subsamples of adolescents in the secondary schools of Kerala based on Gender and Locale

Hypotheses

1. Adolescents in Secondary schools of Kerala have several psychological needs to be satisfied
2. Majority of adolescents in the secondary schools of Kerala will fall in the Average, High and Low group as far as the 12 psychological needs are concerned
3. The psychological needs of adolescents in the secondary schools of Kerala will differ significantly with respect to the subsamples based on Gender and Locale:

Methodology in brief

The 'Normative Survey' method was used for the present study. The study was conducted on a representative sample of 600 adolescents studying in Std IX selected from various secondary schools in Thiruvananthapuram district. The selection of the sample was done on the basis of stratified random sampling technique giving due representation to factors like gender, locale and SES.

Tools used for the study

1. Psychological Needs Inventory (Abraham &Koodappuzha :1978)
2. General Data sheet

The above tools were administered on the sample and the data thus collected were analysed using appropriate statistical techniques and interpreted accordingly.

The Statistical Techniques used for the Study

- Computation of Mean, media, mode and Standard Deviation
- Critical Ratios (Two tailed test of significance for difference between means)

Analysis of data

The Psychological need scores of students were analyzed to find out the Mean, Media, Mode, Standard Deviation and Critical Ratios for

- i. Studying the general nature of the 12 psychological needs of adolescents in the secondary schools of Kerala
- ii. Identifying the High, Average and Low need groups with respect to each of the 12 psychological need variables under study
- iii. Comparing the psychological needs of the subsamples of adolescents in the secondary schools of Kerala based on Gender and Locale

Major Findings

1. The study on the general nature of Psychological need scores reveals that adolescents in the secondary schools of Kerala have several psychological needs to be satisfied.
2. Identification of the three need groups reveals that majority of the adolescents in secondary schools of Kerala fall in the Average or High need group as far as the 12 psychological need variables are concerned. This indicates that they have several psychological needs to be satisfied. Only a small proportion of adolescents under study fall in the Low need group category as far as the different need variables are concerned.
3. Comparison of psychological needs of the sub samples based on *gender* and *locale* shows that (i) A higher proportion of Male students show high needs when compared to their Female counter parts as far as the 11 psychological needs are concerned, the details of the CR values being as follows (given in the order of magnitude):

Psychological needs	CR Value and Level of significance
Need for security	CR =10.88 (p<.01)
Need for knowledge and new experience	CR =9.33 (p<.01)
Need for Adequacy	CR =8.64 (p<.01)
Need for delight	CR =7.80 (p<.01)
Need for Achievement	CR =7.64 (p<.01)
Need for Independence	CR =7.58 (p<.01)
Need for recognition and approval	CR =7.05 (p<.01)
Need to be needed	CR =6.67 (p<.01)
Need for self-esteem	CR =6.17 (p<.01)
Need for love and affection	CR =4.38 (p<.01)
Need for creative expression	CR =3.90 (p<.01)

(ii) A higher proportion of students of Rural Schools have greater needs than their Urban counterparts with respect to five of the psychological needs under study, the details being the following:

Psychological needs	CR Value and Level of significance
Need to belong	CR = 4.00 (p<.01)
Need for love and affection	CR = 3.72 (p<.01)
Need for recognition and approval	CR =2.66 (p<.01)
Need for delight	CR =2.07 (p<.01)
Need for Independence	CR =2.07 (p<.01)

Validity of Hypotheses

The details of the validity of Hypotheses are presented below.

- i. The first Hypothesis *Adolescents in Secondary schools of Kerala have several psychological needs to be satisfied* is accepted as per the results obtained
2. The second Hypothesis *Majority of adolescents in the secondary schools of Kerala will fall in the Average, High and Low group as far as the 12 psychological needs are concerned* is also accepted from the analysis which shows that Majority i.e., 64.7 %, falls under the Average need group while 19.3 % fall under High need group category. Only 16% of the subject under study fall in the Low need group category.
3. The third hypothesis which tells that *the psychological needs of adolescents in the secondary schools of Kerala will differ significantly with respect to the subsamples gender and locale* is partially accepted. For the sub sample *gender* all the other psychological needs show significant difference for male and female students except in the *Need to belong* category.

For locale, only 5 psychological need scores show significant difference (ie., Need to belong, Need for love and affection, Need for recognition and approval, Need for delight, Need for Independence), All the other Psychological need scores are not significant in the case of rural and urban students. So this hypothesis is partially accepted for both the subsamples.

Conclusion

In isolation, children cannot develop the capacities to fulfill their needs for a successful identity. The psychological needs become prominent at the adolescent period of an individual's life. On one hand, personal abilities appear and can be appraised adequately, on the other hand, liabilities and deficiencies begin to stand out as organizers of problem behavior. During this phase of life, the various dimensions of human nature are substantially advanced in their development. Therefore adolescent needs interests and desires are as complex as they ever will be. Adolescence is a time of rapid physiological and psychological change, of intense readjustment to family, school, work and social life and of preparation for adult roles. The process of adolescent socialization and role change are potentially stressful. Since adolescence is also described as the transition from the stage of 'concrete operations' to 'formal operational thinking' following puberty, enabling the adolescent to think in an abstract way to construct hypotheses to adopt a deductive approach in solving problems (Inhelder & Piaget : 1956) is one of the possible solutions. Failure to satisfy one or more needs creates some problems in human life and usually the behavior chosen to meet the need results in less than satisfactory social relations. It is in this context the view of Glasser (1969) becomes quite relevant: "To begin to be successful, children must receive at school what they lack - a good relationship with other people, both children and adult".

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